

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5621

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As of February 10, 2011

**Title:** An act relating to the voting age for school board elections.

**Brief Description:** Establishing the voting age for school board elections.

**Sponsors:** Senator White.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/14/11.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** The 1889 Washington State Constitution defined electors as all persons 21 years of age and over. In 1971 the 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution lowered the federal and state voting age across the nation to age 18 and older. In 1974 amendment 63 to the State Constitution was adopted, which provides that all persons age 18 years of age or older who meet other specified qualifications are entitled to vote at all elections.

Generally, a state legislature may enact a statute that is not prohibited by the state or federal constitution. The right to vote is a fundamental right protected by the equal protection clauses of the constitutions, although it is not absolute. Courts have found that states may impose certain voter qualifications, including an age restriction.

**Summary of Bill:** Students who are 14 years of age as of the date of a school board election are entitled to vote in the district election where they are enrolled.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

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